Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service
AmeriCorps Grant Process

The Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) is a year-round endeavor. All staff and commissioners promote AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps opportunities. As inquiries come in to the office, contact information is added to the "grant distribution list" which is utilized when the call for new proposals is issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). KCCVS officially begins its RFP process once the CNCS issues the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the next program year, which typically occurs in late September or early October.

The criteria for an AmeriCorps program operating in Kentucky is a program of 10 or more members responding to a recognized community need, and operated by a fiscal agent (nonprofit, faith- or community-based organization, educational institution, local government entity and state agency) which has the fiscal capability of managing a federal grant in operation for more than one year. Fiscal agents must complete a fiscal risk assessment prior to the application process.

Once the NOFO is released, the timeline for the RFP is developed and distributed to all interested entities. It is also posted on the KCCVS website and in the KCCVS newsletter. The KCCVS Prime (KCCVS' online grant application) is developed and opened to accept applications. Within the timeline, an "intend to apply" e-mail is requested by a certain date. We refer applicants to the KCCVS website where a number of resources are listed, and staff is available for technical assistance as well. Applicants are provided with the scoring tool used by the grant review panel. Guidelines are given about the types of questions that may be asked. Any information shared with an applicant is posted on the KCCVS website so that all applicants may benefit.

Once the RFP closes, KCCVS staff reviews each application for required information particular to their expertise: the Grants Officer reviews the budget; etc. The KCCVS staff does not score applications, rather each will review one full copy. Each staff reviewer is given a red pen and is asked to mark the application with appropriate comments. That application is shared with the applicant after being reviewed by the grant review panel.

Up to two days are set aside for grant review by a grant review panel. The panel is composed of KCCVS Commissioners and experts in the areas of service proposed by the applicants. All grant reviewers come together to read so if questions or issues arise they may be addressed as needed. The Program Officer provides an overview of expectations and tips on how to read the application but no formal training is provided as KCCVS uses professionals with grants experience as reviewers. The Conflict of Interest statement is reviewed and signed by all panel members. Each application is read a minimum of three (3) times. Reviewers are given a red pen and are asked to circle, question and comment on the application itself, as well as scoring the application using the grant review tool. The commented copies are returned to the applicant as well as the score sheets (except the signature pages which reveal which panel members scored the application).

After the grant review is completed, the Program Committee meets to develop its

recommendations and application rankings for the full commission. Once a consensus is reached, the recommendations are presented to the full commission for review, discussion and approval.

Once approval is received, the applications are returned to the applicants in eGrants, the online grant system. Applicants receive four (4) copies of their reviewed application as well as the score sheets (without the signature pages) for revision per the recommendations of the Commission, Program Committee and grant review panel. KCCVS staff continues to work with the approved applicants as they fine-tune their grant. The Program Officer develops the summary recommendations in response to the conversations held by the Program Committee and the full Commission. The Prime is completed, reviewed, approved and submitted by the KCCVS Program Officer or Executive Director.

Once the competitive grant awards are announced by CNCS (usually late May), the Formula RFP process begins. Any submitted competitive applications that did not receive a competitive grant award are eligible to participate in the Formula RFP. Formula funds are awarded to each state by CNCS based on state population. Additionally, any application(s) that the Program Committee felt were not strong enough for the competitive process may participate in the Formula RFP. The timeline is distributed to all participants. The process is similar to the competitive review process. Submitted applications are reviewed for required content by the KCCVS staff and the Program Committee reviews and scores the applications. The Program Committee develops its recommendations for the full Commission. Once a consensus is achieved, the recommendations are presented to the full Commission for review, discussion and approval. Approved proposals revise their application per the recommendations of the Program Committee. The Program Officer develops the summary recommendations in response to the conversations of the Program Committee and the full Commission. The Prime is completed, reviewed, approved and submitted by the KCCVS Executive Director.

The process begins again in July/August in preparation for the next NOFO release by CNCS. For more information contact Carrie Stith-Webster, Program Officer at 1-800-239-7404 or 1-502-564-7420, extension 3842.

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